

From the
INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINING AUTHORITY

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AUG - 4 1999

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

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THE INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION REPORT
(PCT Rule 71.1)

NOTIFICATION OF TRANSMITTAL OF
THE INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION REPORT

(PCT Rule 71.1)

Date of mailing
(day/month/year)

29.06.99

Applicant's or agent's file reference

03 31222

A25381

WO

IMPORTANT NOTIFICATION

International application No.
PCT/GB98/00808

International filing date (day/month/year)
18/03/1998

Priority date (day/month/year)
27/03/1997

Applicant
BRITISH TELECOMMUNICATIONS P.L.C. et al.

1. The applicant is hereby notified that this International Preliminary Examining Authority transmits herewith the international preliminary examination report and its annexes, if any, established on the international application.
2. A copy of the report and its annexes, if any, is being transmitted to the International Bureau for communication to all the elected Offices.
3. Where required by any of the elected Offices, the International Bureau will prepare an English translation of the report (but not of any annexes) and will transmit such translation to those Offices.

4. REMINDER

The applicant must enter the national phase before each elected Office by performing certain acts (filing translations and paying national fees) within 30 months from the priority date (or later in some Offices) (Article 39(1)) (see also the reminder sent by the International Bureau with Form PCT/IB/301).

Where a translation of the international application must be furnished to an elected Office, that translation must contain a translation of any annexes to the international preliminary examination report. It is the applicant's responsibility to prepare and furnish such translation directly to each elected Office concerned.

For further details on the applicable time limits and requirements of the elected Offices, see Volume II of the PCT Applicant's Guide.

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INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

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| Applicant's or agent's file reference 03 31222 | FOR FURTHER ACTION | | See Notification of Transmittal of International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/IPEA/416) |
| International application No. PCT/GB98/00808 | International filing date (day/month/year) 18/03/1998 | Priority date (day/month/year) 27/03/1997 | |
| International Patent Classification (IPC) or national classification and IPC G06F1/00 | | | |
| <p>Applicant BRITISH TELECOMMUNICATIONS P.L.C. et al.</p> | | | |
| <p>1. This international preliminary examination report has been prepared by this International Preliminary Examining Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.</p> <p>2. This REPORT consists of a total of 12 sheets, including this cover sheet.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, i.e. sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis for this report and/or sheets containing rectifications made before this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT).</p> <p>These annexes consist of a total of sheets.</p> | | | |
| <p>3. This report contains indications relating to the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Basis of the report II <input type="checkbox"/> Priority III <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability IV <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lack of unity of invention V <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability: citations and explanations supporting such statement VI <input type="checkbox"/> Certain documents cited VII <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Certain defects in the international application VIII <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Certain observations on the international application | | | |

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|---|---|
| Date of submission of the demand 25/09/1998 | Date of completion of this report 24.06.99 |
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**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
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I. Basis of the report

1. This report has been drawn on the basis of (*substitute sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to the report since they do not contain amendments.*):

Description, pages:

1-19 as originally filed

Claims, No.:

1-27 as originally filed

Drawings, sheets:

1-8 as received on 06/04/1998 with letter of

2. The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:

the description, pages:
 the claims, Nos.:
 the drawings, sheets:

3. This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed (Rule 70.2(c)):

4. Additional observations, if necessary:

III. Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability

The questions whether the claimed invention appears to be novel, to involve an inventive step (to be non-obvious), or to be industrially applicable have not been examined in respect of:

the entire international application.
 claims Nos. 19-21,27.

because:

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the said international application, or the said claims Nos. 21 relate to the following subject matter which does not require an international preliminary examination (*specify*):

see separate sheet

the description, claims or drawings (*indicate particular elements below*) or said claims Nos. 19-21,27 are so unclear that no meaningful opinion could be formed (*specify*):

see separate sheet

the claims, or said claims Nos. are so inadequately supported by the description that no meaningful opinion could be formed.

no international search report has been established for the said claims Nos. .

IV. Lack of unity of invention

1. In response to the invitation to restrict or pay additional fees the applicant has:

restricted the claims.
 paid additional fees.
 paid additional fees under protest.
 neither restricted nor paid additional fees.

2. This Authority found that the requirement of unity of invention is not complied and chose, according to Rule 68.1, not to invite the applicant to restrict or pay additional fees.

3. This Authority considers that the requirement of unity of invention in accordance with Rules 13.1, 13.2 and 13.3 is

complied with.
 not complied with for the following reasons:

see separate sheet

4. Consequently, the following parts of the international application were the subject of international preliminary examination in establishing this report:

all parts.
 the parts relating to claims Nos. 1-18.

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V. Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

1. Statement

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Novelty (N) | Yes: Claims 1-18 |
| | No: Claims |
| Inventive step (IS) | Yes: Claims 18 |
| | No: Claims 1-17 |
| Industrial applicability (IA) | Yes: Claims 1-18 |
| | No: Claims |

2. Citations and explanations

see separate sheet

VII. Certain defects in the international application

The following defects in the form or contents of the international application have been noted:

see separate sheet

VIII. Certain observations on the international application

The following observations on the clarity of the claims, description, and drawings or on the question whether the claims are fully supported by the description, are made:

see separate sheet

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Re Item III

**Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and
industrial applicability**

1. Claims 19-21 and 27 are excluded from the international preliminary examination under Article 34(4)(a)(ii) PCT, because the International Preliminary Examining Authority considers that these claims are unclear and do not adequately define the technical features of the subject matter to be protected, such that no meaningful opinion can be formed on the novelty, inventive step (non-obviousness), or industrial applicability, of the claimed subject matter.

Attention is drawn in this respect to the Guidelines, C-III 3.7.a, according to which a claim may contain a reference to another claim even if it is not a dependent claim as defined in Rule 6.4. One example of this is a claim referring to a claim of a different category (e.g., "Apparatus for carrying out the process of Claim 1 ...", or "Process for the manufacture of the product of Claim 1 ...").

In such cases it should be clear to which extent the claim containing the reference necessarily involves all the features of the claim referred to and to which extent it does not.

In general, the fact that the claim referred to contains novel and inventive matter does not necessarily imply that the same is also true of the independent claim containing the reference.

In the present case it is first noted that the reference in claims 20-21 should read "a method as claimed in claims 1-18" rather than "a method as claimed in any preceding claim", since claim 19 at least is not a method claim.

Moreover, and although the respective categories of claims 19-21 and 27 are partially not clear, it is held that the present formulation of claims does not precisely define limitations of the claimed server, initiation, copy protected data and client, respectively, because these claims contain solely a vague reference to the method claims. For example, Claim 19 ("server configured to perform a method...") must be understood as covering in effect any server computer suitable for performing the method, which is not a sufficient definition.

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As to claim 20, it is not clear whether that claim ("Initiation" ?) is directed
- to a "Method for downloading, by the client, of ", in which case claim 20 is
redundant with claims 22-26, or
- to the "Use of the client "; in that case it is noted that the client itself is not
defined by any explicit features, but only by reference to the method claims; this
"reference of reference" renders the subject matter of claim 20 unclear.

Claims 19 and 28 are not clear, because the mere formulation "configured to
perform a method as claimed ..." does not suffice to define which technical
features must be provided to enable the server/client to perform the respective
method.

Claim 21 is not clear, because its introductory statement is directed to "copy
protected data", which amounts to claim protection for the content of information
rather than for the physical entity (server, client) or the activity (method of copy
protecting or of downloading copy-protected data) specifically disclosed in the
description.

2. Claims 21 is excluded from the international preliminary examination under
Article 34(4)(a)(i) PCT, because the International Preliminary Examining Authority
considers that this claim - since it is directed to "... data stored on the client ..." is
similar to a subject matter on which the International Preliminary Examining
Authority is not required, under the Regulations, cf. Rule 67.1.v) ("presentation of
information ..."), to carry out an international preliminary examination, and in the
particular case decides not to carry out such examination, see also the PCT
Guidelines, C-IV.2, in particular C-IV.2.4e) ("information recorded on a carrier", as
distinguished from an arrangement or process).
This subject matter is also considered as non-patentable in at least some of the
national or regional laws of the designated states.

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Re Item IV

Lack of unity of invention

1. The International Preliminary Examination Authority considers that the requirement of unity of invention (Rule 13 PCT) is not met. The separate inventions/groups of invention are: - Claims 1-18: Method of copy protecting data sent from a server to a client; - Claims 22-26: Method of downloading encrypted data from a server to a client' including registering the client with the server.
2. They are not so linked as to form a single general inventive concept (Rule 13.1 PCT) for the following reasons:
 - 2.1 Independent claim 1 is directed to a method of copy protecting data sent in cryptographically protected form from a server to a client by selectively controlling copying functions of the client. No mention is made of registering the client with the server. The claimed features solve the objective problem of allowing the owner of data available on a server, e.g. copyright works which are displayed on HTML pages, to avoid that his works, e.g. a graphics file, may be readily copied on a client's computer and replicated without significant degradation.
 - 2.2 Independent claim 22 refers to a method of downloading encrypted data from a server to a client, including registering the client with the server by means of unique determinator based on a machine identifier of the client. This solves the problem (cf. p.16, l. 20) of how an individual key can be provided for registering a client with a server and, as indicated at the last paragraph of page 19, may be used for other authentication processes (than that of claim 1). The claim does not contain the special technical features mentioned in point 2.1.
3. In conclusion, the two independent claims are not linked by a special technical feature nor by a single general inventive concept. Hence the application does not meet the requirements of Unity of Invention as defined in Rule 13(1)&(2) PCT.
4. As apparent from the search report, the search has been performed on all claims of the international application.

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5. Since the applicant has neither paid additional fees nor restricted the claims following the official invitation, the present examination report has been established on claims 1-18 which are considered as the "main invention", see the Guidelines C-VI 5.6.

Re Item V

Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

1. Related prior art

Reference is made to the following documents/; the numbering will be adhered to in the rest of the procedure:

D1: YOURDON E: "JAVA, THE WEB, AND SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT" COMPUTER, vol. 29, no. 8, August 1996, pages 25-30, XP000632764;

D2: DEAN D ET AL: "JAVA SECURITY: FROM HOTJAVA TO NETSCAPE AND BEYOND" PROCEEDINGS OF THE 1996 IEEE SYMPOSIUM ON SECURITY AND PRIVACY, OAKLAND, CA., MAY 6 - 8, 1996, no. SYMP.17, 6 May 1996, INSTITUTE OF ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONICS ENGINEERS, pages 190-200, XP000634844;

D3: WO-A-9407204

D4: US-A-5235642

D5: EP-A-0718761

D6: BENDER W ET AL: "TECHNIQUES FOR DATA HIDING" IBM SYSTEMS JOURNAL, vol. 35, no. 3/04, 1996, pages 313-335, XP000635079;

- 1.1. The D1 paper, which is considered as the closest prior art document for claims 1 -18, deals with security on the Internet (see the item "Security" on page 28), and submits that applications should ensure "secure access to functionality and data, as well as secure transmission of data across the Internet". Adding digital

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signatures to applets is contemplated, such that a user can be sure of the source and origin of a downloaded applets. As typical for a client server application, a password may be asked "to determine the end user's authorisation to invoke certain functionalities of access certain data", and "the application will interact with the browser to encrypt/decrypt transmissions between the client and the server". The paper further proposes to integrate encryption packages like PGP into Internet applications and achieve higher security with a public key password system.

- 1.2. The D2 article deals (see in particular the passages cited in the search report) with the security issues raised in Web browsers such as HotJava and Netscape by server supplied code constituted by Java applets downloaded to and run inside the Web browser. "In Netscape, Java applets can name only those functions and variables explicitly exported to the Java subsystem". This paper further suggests that Java would be more secure if encryption and/or a crewel were used.
- 1.3. D4 proposes to achieve access control using copies of clients credentials cached at the server for future use. The security system includes a computer at each node of the distributed system with a trusted computing base that includes an authentication agent for authenticating requests received from principals at other nodes in the system. Requests are transmitted to servers as messages that include a first identifier (Auth ID) provided by the requester and a second identifier (called the subchannel value) provided by the authentication agent of the requester node. Each sewer process has an associated local cache that identifies requesters whose previous request messages have been authenticated. When a request is received, the server checks the request's two identifiers against the entries in its local cache. If there is a match, the request is known to be authentic, without having to obtain authentication from the requester's node.
- 1.4. D6 relates to steganography/ watermarking.
2. Although no full examination can be conducted, it would appear that claims 1-17 (first invention) do not fulfill the criteria of Article 33 (1)PCT, because their subject matter lacks an inventive step with respect to the prior art documents analysed above, at least when taken in combination, for the following reasons :

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- 2.1. According to pages 1-2, the general problem addressed by the application consists essentially in providing a method allowing the owner of data available on a server, e.g. copyright works which are displayed on HTML pages, to avoid that his works, e.g. a graphics file, may be readily copied on a client's computer and replicated without significant degradation.
- 2.2. Methods and systems for ensuring security of functionality and data in a client-server environment - in particular in the Internet - are known, see D1 and D2. However these documents do not directly address the specific problem of protecting from copying data which have been downloaded from a server to a client, nor its solution claimed in claim 1. Hence the subject matter of claim 1 is new against D1 and D2.
- 2.3. It is held, nevertheless, that the skilled person confronted with the above specific problem, would need no inventive activity to infer from the general teaching of D1 ("to determine the end user's authorisation to invoke certain functionalities of access certain data") and/or D2 ("applets can name only those functions and variables explicitly exported to the Java subsystem"), at least when taken in combination, that a solution consists in selectively controlling copying functions of the client in respect of the downloaded data, hence arriving at the subject matter of claim 1.

Since encryption is also proposed by both D1 and D2, and hashing is known in the art as a similar security measure ensuring integrity of data - D1 also suggests hashing by proposing to add signatures to information downloaded from the Web such that the receiving side can be sure of its source and origin, thus of its integrity -, the matter of claims 2-4 does not appear to involve an inventive step.

The same reasoning applies for identifying/authorizing/registering the client to the server (claims 5, 6, 17), which are also taught by D1 (password, public key password system) and D3-D4.

The downloading of a program (claims 7-8) is known per se (see specifically D5), the features of claims 9-13 appear to belong to general knowledge in the art, as well as the use of a cryptographic key (claims 14-15). Steganographically marking data (claim 16) is known in the art (see D6).

3. The application does not meet the requirements of Article 33(2) and (3) PCT, because the systems/methods of D1-D2, D4 and D6 anticipate, at least when taken in combination, the features claimed in claims 1-17.
4. It would appear that the combination of the features of dependent claim 18, as dependent on claim 15, itself as dependent on claim 7, is neither known from, nor rendered obvious by, the available prior art. Hence it appears that a allowable independent claim could have been drafted to include these features, although it is not clear how to formulate the precise technical problem encountered with the prior art that the features of such an amended method claim would overcome.

Re Item VII

Certain defects in the international application

1. Contrary to the requirements of Rule 5.1(a)(ii) PCT, the relevant background art disclosed in the document/s D1-D2, D4 and D6 is/are not mentioned in the description, nor is/are this/these document/s identified therein.
The introduction to the description should also have
 - more clearly identified the problem to be solved by the present invention;
 - specified the technical differences between the prior art and the subject matter of the claims; and
 - indicated how these differences provide the solution to the problem to be solved.
2. Independent claim 1 is not in the two-part form in accordance with Rule 6.3(b) PCT, which in the present case would be appropriate, with those features known in combination from the prior art being placed in a preamble (Rule 6.3(b)(i) PCT) and with the remaining features being included in a characterising part (Rule 6.3(b)(ii) PCT).

The applicant has not provided reasons why the claim should not be in the two-part form. Neither did he clearly indicate in the description which feature/s of the subject-matter of claim 1 is/are already known from the prior art; see PCT Guidelines PCT/GL/3 III, 2.3a.

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Re Item VIII

Certain observations on the international application

1. The /vague and imprecise/ statement in the description on the paragraph bridging pages 15-16 ("scope of invention") implies that the subject-matter for which protection is sought may be different to that defined by the claims, thereby resulting in lack of clarity (Article 6 PCT) when used to interpret them (see also the PCT Guidelines, PCT/GL/3 III, 4.3a).
2. The features of the claim/e are not provided with reference signs placed in parentheses (Rule 6.2(b) PCT).

1/8

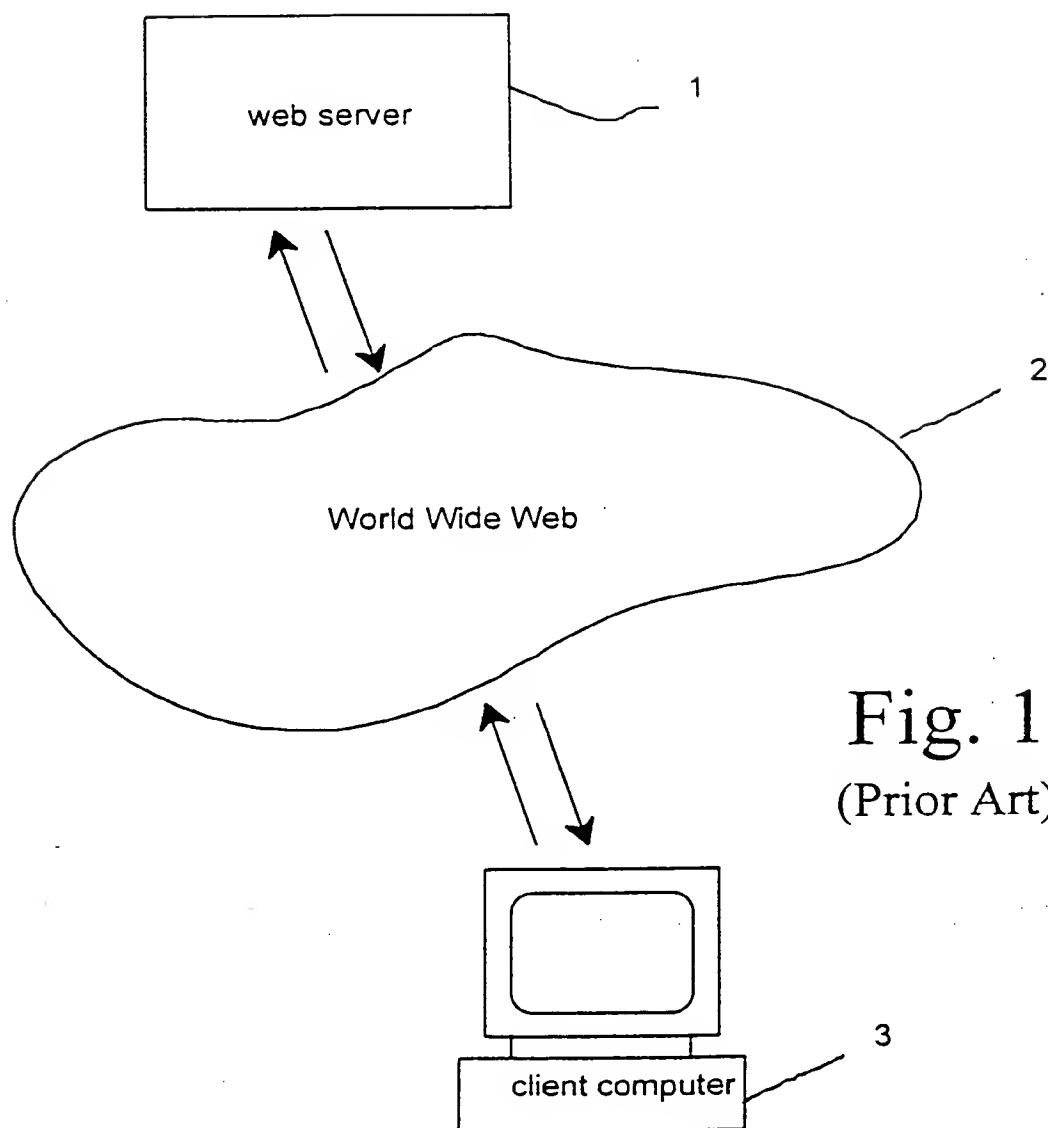


Fig. 1
(Prior Art)

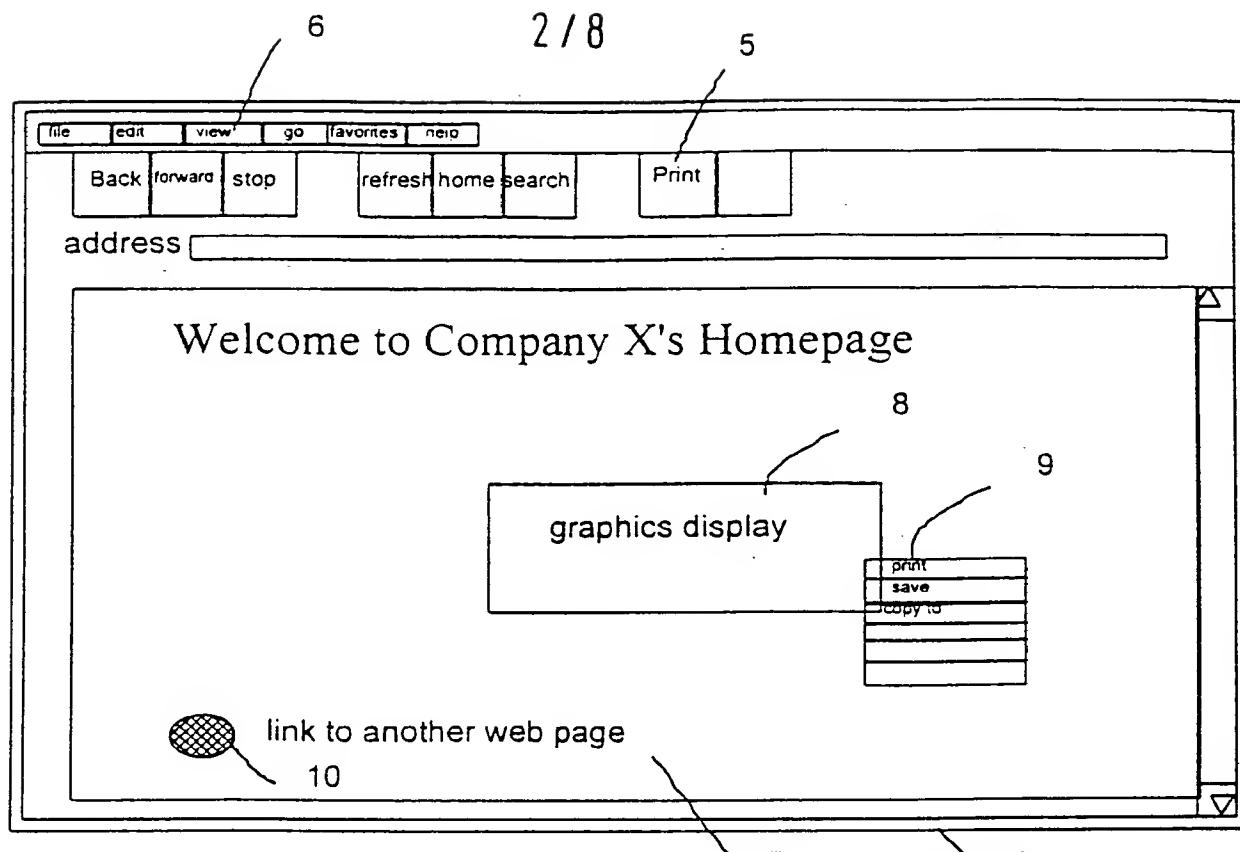


Fig. 2 (Prior Art)

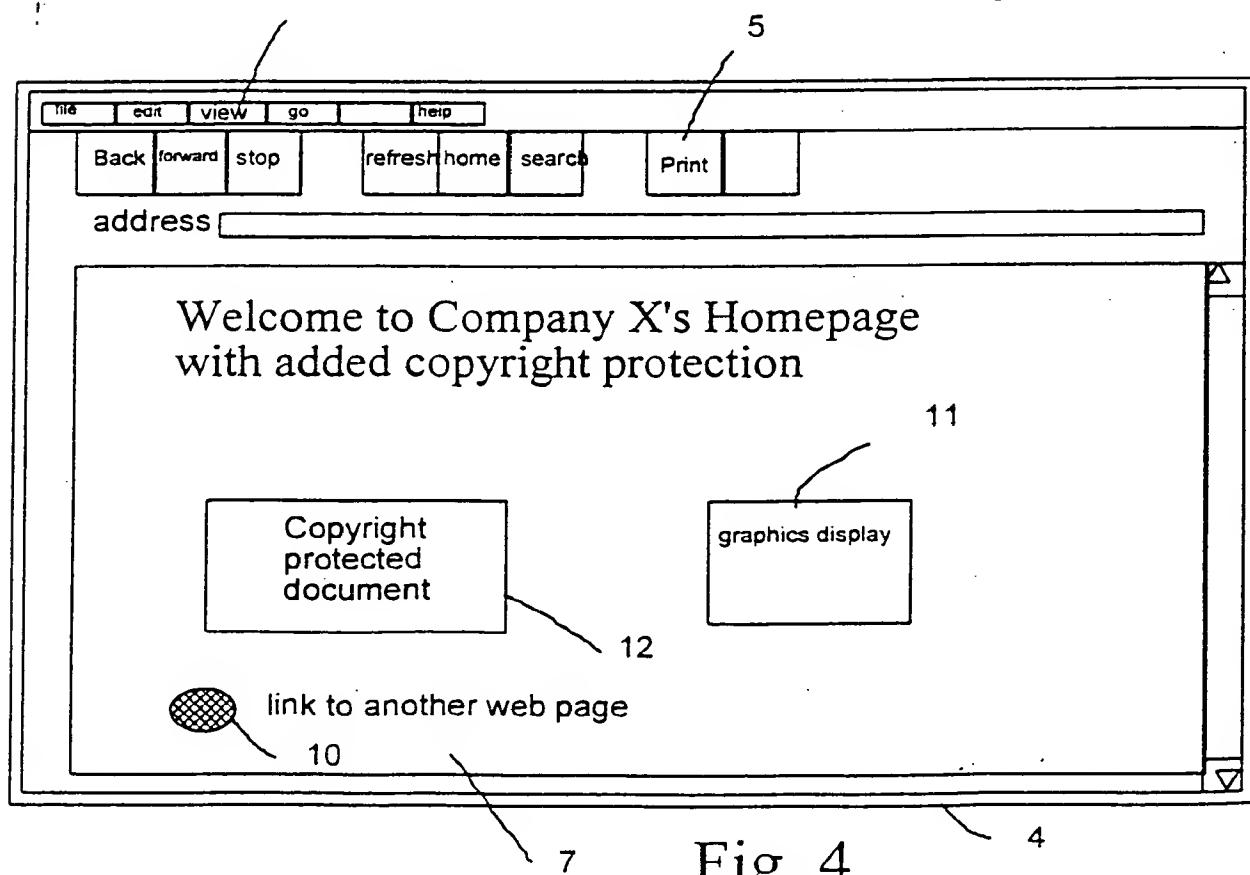


Fig. 4